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AUTHOR Thompson, Morris
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ABSTRACT

The year 1974 marked the first full year in which the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officially embarked on a policy of advising and assisting American Indian tribes to assume the administration of their own affairs (self-determination). It seeks to strengthen and stabilize tribal governments while continuing to maintain and fulfill its trust responsibilities. BIA trust responsibilities consist of protecting the Indians' land, water, minerals, forests, and other resources. Some positive accomplishments regarding these responsibilities have been the three-stage format for inventorying water resources affecting reservations; the Catalog of Rights Issues, which identifies a multitude of Indian rights problems; the Menominee Restoration; and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. In the area of education, new initiatives are emerging such as more community involvement. Indian services provided by the BIA include: (1) the Tribal Government Development Program, which encourages the growth of self-determination by using program funds to establish effective tribal governments; (2) the implementation of the court decision which restored the off-reservation fishing rights of 14 tribes in western Washington State; (3) housing for Alaska Natives; (4) faster action on roll appeals; and (5) development of tribal resources, such as setting up new enterprises and expanding old ones. (NQ)

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Self-Determination:

FIRST STEPS

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Report by
Morris Thompson,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs

OCTOBER 1974

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"What I am doing . . . is to pursue some fundamental and achievable goals in the area of my responsibility for Indian Affairs."

Rogers C.B. Morton,
Secretary of the Interior

THE KEY WORD IS 'INVOLVEMENT'

In a practical sense, the year 1974 is the first full year in which the current federal policy of self-determination for tribes and Indian citizens has been in force.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs in the past has gone through many stages of *directing* the affairs of tribes. It is now officially embarked on a policy of *advising and assisting* tribes as they assume the administration of their own affairs if, when, and as soon as they wish to do so.

Perhaps at no time in the history of the United States have Indians enjoyed a more sympathetic climate than exists today. The Administration, the Congress and the public at large are totally behind the legitimate aspirations of the Indian community in pursuit of its goals. These goals, in essence, are: a standard of living equal to that of the nation as a whole; a more proportionate share in the economic growth of the country; more enlightened development of human natural resources on reservations: in short, greater self-determination for the Indian citizen in modern America.

Specifically, the Bureau seeks to strengthen and stabilize tribal governments while continuing to maintain and fulfill its trust responsibilities. Along the way, we seek a maximum of pertinent counsel from Indian thought leaders and responsible Indian organizations.

We believe the best way for Bureau specialists to serve their constituencies is first to examine *what* is required by Indian people, and then tailor the service to fit the specific need. After that, get the job done as expeditiously as possible.

Most of all, we seek the involvement of Indian people themselves every step of the way. Self-determination can be many things to many groups. It is complicated, but is not mysterious.

We see the BIA as the agent, the advocate of the Indian community in a two-way effort: to make a contribution of talent and skills as full citizens; and to gain a full measure of social rights and economic opportunities from a rich nation.

Morris Thompson

"Under my leadership, the Bureau's top priorities will be meeting our trust responsibilities, the delivery of meaningful services, and the achievement of greater Indian self-determination."

(statement by Morris Thompson at nomination hearing before Senate Interior Committee, November 1973)*

THE BIA IN WASHINGTON

It has been said, with some truth, that what the BIA does *not* need is another reorganization. We have endured more major surgery than any federal agency in Washington. Out of this has come some positive benefits. The attention of the public, the Congress and the Executive is now focused on Indian Affairs. Our budget for fiscal 1975 is $634.7 million. This is the largest budget in the 150-year history of the Bureau, which began in 1824 as little more than a desk and a file cabinet in a corner of what was then the War Department.

Today, some 62 percent of the 13,600 permanent employees of the Bureau nationwide are Indian. Fewer than one percent of us are in Washington; the remainder are at posts ranging from Point Barrow, Alaska to Sarasota, Florida.

We pursue a steady objective of trying to recruit the best available Indian talent for positions within the Bureau. Since January of this year we have made the following permanent appointments. First, the critical top directorships of line responsibility:

POSITION	APPOINTEE
Director, Tribal Resources Development	Daniel D. McDonald (Nez Perce/ Flathead)
Director, Trust Responsibilities	Martin E. Seneca, Jr. (Seneca)
Director, Indian Services	Theodore C. Krenzke
Director, Indian Education Programs	Clennon E. Sockey (Choctaw)
Director, Administration	Jose E. Zuni (Isleta Pueblo)

* *Morris Thompson, 35, an Athabascan Indian born in Tanana, Alaska, was an engineering major at the University of Alaska. He worked in electronics, space technology and rural development before becoming the youngest man ever to serve as Commissioner of Indian Affairs.*

Five major appointments: *From left: Jose A. Zuni, director, Administration; Daniel D. McDonald, director, Tribal Resources Development; Theodore Krenzke, director, Indian Services; Commissioner Thompson; Clennon E. Sockey, director, Indian Education Programs; Martin E. Seneca, Jr., director, Trust Responsibilities.*

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One-third of the budget, one-third of the people. *Education Programs absorb more BIA attention than any other activity. An Indian student group visits Washington for a briefing by Commissioner Thompson.*

Four new Area Directors have been appointed:

AREA OFFICE	APPOINTEE
Juneau	Clarence Antioquia (Tlingit)
Portland	Francis T. Briscoe (Caddo)
Anadarko	Charles W. James (Choctaw)
Muskogee	Thomas J. Ellison (Choctaw)

. . . and 16 Agency Superintendents

AGENCY	APPOINTEE
Nome	Gary T. Longley (Eskimo)
Fairbanks	Frederick J. Baker (Mandan)
Bethel	Peter P. Three Stars (Oglala Sioux)
Western Washington	Stephen A. Lozar (Flathead)
Yankton	Loren J. Farmer (Blackfeet)
Rosebud	Elmer Compton (Rosebud Sioux)
Ft. Totten	Jene Brennan (Shoshone)
Crow	George Lavendure (Chippewa)
San Carlos	James Howell (Cherokee)
Colville	Eddie Palmanteer (Colville)
Northern Idaho	Vincent Little (Mojave)
Umatilla	Jose Carpio (Isleta Pueblo)
Standing Rock	Shirley Plume (Oglala Sioux)
Hopi	Alph H. Secakuku (Hopi)
Tuba City	Frankie E. Paul (Navajo)
Cherokee	Jeff Muskrat (Cherokee)

. . . and others

POSITION	APPOINTEE
Asst. Supt. Yakima Agency	Merritt E. Youngdeer (Cherokee)
Supt. Phoenix Indian School	Frank Self (Choctaw)
Supt. Sequoya High School	Amon A. Baker (Cherokee)
Supt. Chemawa School	Edward Lonefight (Mandan-Hidatsa)
Supt. Chilocco School	Jimmy Baker (Choctaw)
Asst. Area Dir., Minneapolis	Alton R. Nordwall (Chippewa)
Employment Assistance Ofcr., Cleveland	James J. Thomas (Winnebago)
Dir., Personnel, BIA Washington	Ignatius L. Billy (Pomo)
Asst. Area Dir., Education, Muskogee	Edwin Moore (Creek)
San Carlos Irrigation Project Engineer	William Hauff (Sioux)
Liaison Officer, Seneca Nation, Syracuse, N.Y.	Robert St. Arnold (Chippewa)

These are by no means all the appointments that have been made since January 1974, but they are indicative of our efforts to implement the policy of Indian preference.

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TRUST RESPONSIBILITIES

American Indian citizens own nearly 100 million acres of U. S. land. About half of this—55 million acres—is held for them under a trust relationship, meaning that the United States is obligated by law to protect these tribal assets, in the sense that tribes are not cheated out of their land, water, minerals, forests and other resources. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is the agent of the trustee (the United States) in these matters.

Trust responsibilities originated with the early treaties between sovereign tribes and the maturing federal government. In the last century, laws passed by Congress have defined trust matters.

In the field of Indian rights protection, 1974 has been a fruitful year. While many issues are still unresolved, some positive accomplishments are visible:

Water Rights. A cooperative effort by the Bureau, Indian tribes and professional consultants has developed a 3-stage format for inventorying water resources affecting reservations. There are currently no less than 104 studies in progress and on schedule. Tribal involvement in these studies is extensive. The Bureau is developing model water codes for regulating reservation water resources; it is also helping tribes to develop specific water codes for their individual water resources.

Catalog of Rights Issues. This is a major step forward in getting a multitude of Indian rights problems on the table for action. To date this year, almost 300 issues have been identified. About two-thirds of these can be resolved by negotiation; the remainder may require litigation or legislation. Some recent decisions stemming from the Bureau's major objective of rights protection include:

A. **Fort Mojave** Hay and Wood Reserve. Title to 3,500 acres of reservation land is being returned to the Tribe.

Greater delegation of authority, faster execution. *As the first Indian Commissioner to report directly to the Secretary of the Interior, Thompson enjoys close rapport with Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton.*

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The federal government has acknowledged the cause of the exclusion: a faulty land survey taken 50 years ago.

B. **Lake Roosevelt.** The hunting, fishing and boating rights of the Colville and Spokane Tribes in the lake zones have been restored. Federal law now reinforces the principle that the taking of Indian lands for Grand Coulee Dam did not diminish the reservation boundaries or reduce the Tribes' powers of self-government.

C. **Chemehuevi Shoreline.** By federal administrative action in August, lands taken from the Tribe for the Lake Havasu Project were restored.

Menominee Restoration. After several years of intensive work, particularly by tribal members, trust status was restored to the Menominee Tribe by an Act of Congress signed by the President last December. Subsequently, a tribal Restoration Committee has been elected and the Bureau is working with it to provide federal services to the Tribe and its members.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Signed into law in 1971, this Act calls for the cession of one-twelfth of Alaska's land area and $962.5 million in disbursements to Alaska Natives by the federal government. The Bureau provides ongoing technical assistance to implement the complex provisions of this Act.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS: NEW INITIATIVES

Almost one-third of the total BIA budget and one-third of its employees are involved in education programs. The most important resource we have is our Indian youth; understandably, education is among the top BIA priorities.

We are convinced of what Indian educators have learned over the years: the vital ingredient in a child's school progress is the *continued interest* of his parents. Without parental involvement, the most carefully conceived and executed educational program is mostly wasted effort. With this in mind, we insist that every project, particularly in the primary and intermediate grades, be structured to get parents involved and keep them involved.

Some Indian communities have assumed full responsibility for the management of their schools under contracts with the Bureau. This year, in about 100 communities, we will be conducting special training programs to acquaint Indian parents and school board members of the management options open to them. This will help these communities select the degree of involvement they prefer in the operation of their schools.

Tribal and intertribal groups are also administering other programs such as higher education assistance and assistance to Indian students in public schools (JOM). The recent revision of Johnson-O'Malley regulations greatly strengthens the role of local Indian education committees in determining how these funds shall be used. The new regulations emphasize the provision of special supplemental programs for Indian students. This means the money is going more directly to Indian students than to the public school districts.

Touring Menominee Enterprises with Ray Lightfoot, Minneapolis Area Director (left), and Ada Deer, chairman, Menominee Restoration Committee.

In pursuit of further community involvement, we have surveyed some 3,000 Indian people for their views on education. Conclusions based on this survey have been incorporated in the Education sections of the revised Bureau Manual. In this way the Indian community is helping to write its own self-determination guidelines.

Such participation is already beginning to spur lively new attitudes about education in the minds of young Indians. The Bureau's Career Development Program helps them in career selection via funding assistance, counseling services and training opportunities of many kinds.

The results are encouraging. By next year some 16,000 Indian college students will receive assistance grants from the Bureau; in 1969 the number was only 3,432. We have obtained $7 million more in budget assistance for higher education this year than we had in fiscal 74.

INDIAN SERVICES

Tribal Government Development Program. This activity by the Bureau encourages the growth of self-determination through the use of program funds to establish effective tribal governments. Tribes qualify for the program on the basis of an objective formula that measures tribal needs.

At present 83 tribes are participating in TGDP and have expressed their own priorities in the use of funds for which they qualify. Such priorities include: updating of tribal constitutions (many tribes are reviewing their constitutions with the help of Bureau specialists), establishment of tribal offices, ordinance codification, establishment of personnel systems for tribal employees, and the updating of membership rolls.

U.S. v. Washington. In an unusual federal court ruling this year, the off-reservation fishing rights of 14 tribes in western Washington State were restored. These were treaty rights dating from the arrival of white settlers in the Pacific Northwest and abrogated for almost a century. Plaintiff in the suit was the federal government, acting through the Bureau on behalf of the tribes and suing the State of Washington for restoration of tribal rights. The BIA is currently implementing the court decision and monitoring such activities as the issuance of identification cards

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to enrolled members so that they may exercise their restored rights.

A significant side effect of this decision has been to open the door to possible recognition of several other tribes in the area that have been virtually forgotten by the federal government.

Alaska Housing. A new approach to housing for Alaska Natives has been initiated by the Bureau. Funded by the federal government through HUD, 500 individual dwelling units will be constructed throughout Alaska beginning next spring.

A principal contribution of the BIA has been the design of a house scaled to the requirements of the region rather than to the standards of Indian housing elsewhere. This prototype house, slightly smaller than the lower 48 model, is more than adequate against Alaskan weather, yet is lower in construction and utilities costs.

The Bureau is presently involved in establishing regional housing authorities in Alaska and in negotiating with contractors to supply materials for springtime construction.

Faster Action on Roll Appeal. Procedural delay on membership roll appeals will be shortened as a result of recent delegation of new authority to the Commissioner. In the past there have been unavoidable delays in the handling of tribal judgment awards because they had to be cleared by the Secretary of the Interior personally. As of August the Indian Commissioner is empowered to handle these matters directly. This will speed up the disbursement of judgment money in tribal programs.

TRIBAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

It is a mandate of the Bureau to help develop productively every resource available to tribes toward improving the quality of life for Indians. Natural resources on reservations include timber, coal, oil, gas and uranium. In this recklessly acquisitive age, much BIA effort is also expended in preventing the *despoiling* of tribal resources by energy interests and land speculators.

On the positive side, Indian enterprise is moving ahead. There are now more than 400 separate businesses in the U.S. owned and operated by Indians, their combined annual payrolls exceeding $35 million. The Bureau helps set up new enterprises and expand old ones. For example, the Devils Lake Sioux Manufacturing Corporation of North Dakota, jointly owned by the tribe and the Brunswick Corporation, was recently awarded a $125-million, 5-year contract to make camouflage material for the Department of Defense. Three-quarters of the employees of this plant are tribal members.

Promotion of tourism on reservations is on the rise, fostered by the American Indian Travel Commission, an all-Indian corporation. It is expected that the spread of the Bicentennial spirit plus the increasing cost of overseas travel will persuade more Americans to spend their vacations at Indian resorts, which are growing in number and facilities.